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Who Says Romance How a Determined Virginia Beauty Swam the Torrent with Her Sweetheart, Just to Get to the Minister Before the Enraged Papa

WHEN they tell you that the Age of Romance has yielded its last gasp to this triumphant Age of Gasolene—that automobiles, talking machines, moving pictures, wireless telegraphy, mechanical piano players, split skirts and the discovery of electrons have combined to cause good old Romance to yield up its penultimate expiration—just you go and ask pretty Mrs. Lillian Myrtle Blithen-Adkinson of this little town about it.

Nothing like a living, breathing illustration wherewith to nail a contemptible lie. Hard put to it by the cohorts of Gasolene, good old Romance picked out sweet little Lillian Myrtle and stalwart young Henry Hoover Adkinson and forthwith used them as a hammer to hit that nail on the head and drive it home. At home (after the honeymoon), Greenbrier River, West Virginia.

"Good old Romance," said Lillian Myrtle, shaking another handful of rice out of her curls. "Leander, who swam the Hellespont, had nothing on my Henry Hoover."

"My Lillian Myrtle," said Henry Hoover, as he brushed the imprint of an old shoe from his coat, "has Leander's Hero faded to an echo. Talk about swimming!"

In the meantime wise old Dr. Romance was operating on the paternal Blithen and the paternal Adkinson, restoring a vestigial feud into functional activity.

"No daughter of mine shall marry an Adkinson," declared Papa Blithen.

"What! a son of mine give his honored name to a female Blithen? Never!" roared Papa Adkinson.

"Alas and alas!" sighed Henry Hoover. "Must we forego the paternal blessing? Besides, I need the money."

But Lillian Myrtle's flower-like face bore the radiance of ecstasy. Henry Hoover regarded her with amazement, then with a lover's swift suspicion.

"Ah," he said, bitterly, "you never really loved me. You are glad to be out of it!"

"Darling, silly Henry," she said. "Can't you see how truly fortunate we are? Hard-hearted fathers. Emphatic paternal 'noes' from both sides—and people say that Romance is dead!"

"That's it!" exclaimed Henry Hoover, seeing a great light. "We must elope—you angel!"

"My own darling Henry," whispered Lillian Myrtle.

Came the auspicious midnight. Old Professor Romance temporarily eclipsed by Papa Blithen, not yet home from a country political meeting. Lillian Myrtle, taking no chances of running into him at the front gate, still tucked up, listening. One o'clock! Two o'clock! What will darling Henry Hoover think? Two-thirty. Romance with a vengeance! Ah, that's Papa Blithen's footstep—the sound of his shoes dropped on the floor—he's abed! Lillian Myrtle untucks herself, completely dressed, and runs for it.

In her agitation she lets the front gate close with a suspicious bang. As she speeds on toward the trysting place, toward her Henry

Does old Professor Romance chuckle? He does. For plainly to be heard is the angry honking of the pursuing machine. What is Romance without an elopement? What is an elopement without angry parental pursuit? Consider that Lillian Myrtle and Henry Hoover join heartily in the chuckles of Professor Romance. Isn't it really too bad that Henry's big Mercedes can so easily outdistance the Blithen model?

The elopers are whirling along the river bank opposite the minister's house on the other side. The bridge is two miles further up the stream—four miles more in which to outpace Papa Blithen, and do the deed. Shamefully easy!

But right here, opposite the minister's house, good old Romance plays his trump card for the humiliating defeat of the Gasoline Hypothesis. He blows up two tires and shunts the demoralized machine down the bank, where it "bogs down" in water and clay.

"Great scott!" exclaims Henry Hoover, having discovered that the wreck is beyond repair.

Dawn has come, and with it the speeding silhouette of Papa Blithen against the sky on a hilltop agonizingly near.

"Hi, there!" yells Papa Blithen, shaking his fist as he clatters down the hill.

"All is lost!" says Henry Hoover, clasping Lillian Myrtle defiantly to his manly bosom.

"Look!" says she, pointing across the narrow river. "The minister's house. He is up and waiting."

"So near and yet so far," laments Henry Hoover.

"Hi, there!" shouts violent Papa Blithen, not two hundred yards away.

"Henry, darling," says Lillian Myrtle, "Leander swam the Hellespont."

"But his Hero," says Henry Hoover dully, "was on the other side."

"So is a minister to marry us," says the wideawake Lillian Myrtle, dragging him down to the river bank.

Suddenly Henry Hoover woke up and Romance got a strangle hold on him. Stopping only to strip off their shoes, the lovers breast the stream together. When half-way across, and swimming strongly, they heard once more, "Hi, there!" from Papa Blithen.

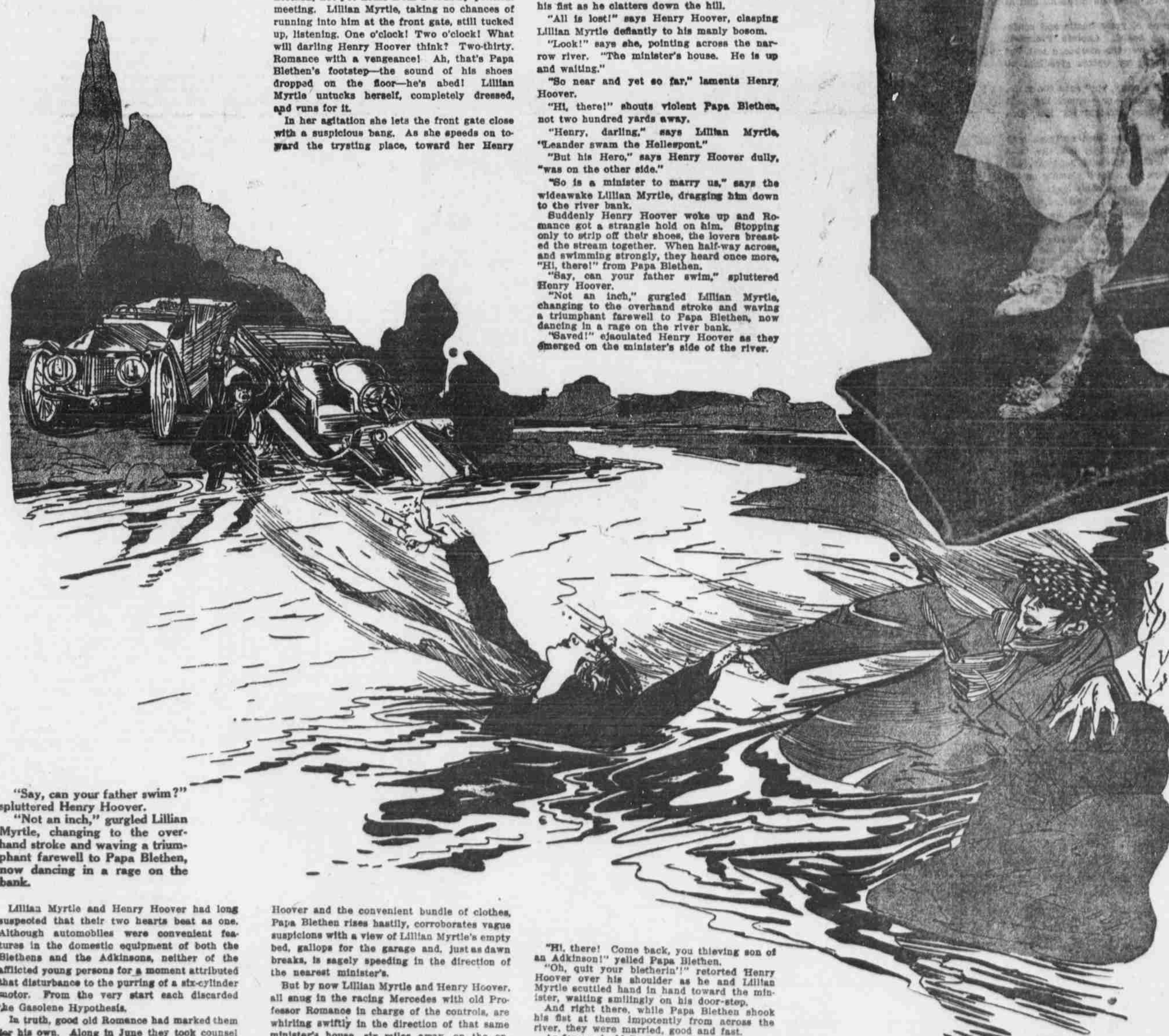
"Say, can your father swim," spluttered Henry Hoover.

"Not an inch," gurgled Lillian Myrtle, changing to the overhand stroke and waving a triumphant farewell to Papa Blithen, now dancing in a rage on the river bank.

"Saved!" ejaculated Henry Hoover as they emerged on the minister's side of the river.



Lillian Myrtle Adkinson, Who Proved That Romance Is Still Very Much Alive.



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Lillian Myrtle and Henry Hoover had long suspected that their two hearts beat as one. Although automobiles were convenient features in the domestic equipment of both the Blithens and the Adkinsons, neither of the afflicted young persons for a moment attributed that disturbance to the purring of a six-cylinder motor. From the very start each discarded the Gasoline Hypothesis.

In truth, good old Romance had marked them for his own. Along in June they took counsel together about it. Unanimous verdict—heart!

Hoover and the convenient bundle of clothes, Papa Blithen rises hastily, corroborates vague suspicions with a view of Lillian Myrtle's empty bed, gallops for the garage and, just as dawn breaks, is sagely speeding in the direction of the nearest minister's.

But by now Lillian Myrtle and Henry Hoover, all snug in the racing Mercedes with old Professor Romance in charge of the controls, are whirling swiftly in the direction of that same minister's house, six miles away, on the opposite bank of Greenbrier River.

"Hi, there! Come back, you thieving son of an Adkinson!" yelled Papa Blithen.

"Oh, quit your bletherin'!" retorted Henry Hoover over his shoulder as he and Lillian Myrtle scuttled hand in hand toward the minister, waiting smilingly on his door-step.

And right there, while Papa Blithen shook his fist at them impotently from across the river, they were married, good and fast.

As for good old Professor Romance, does he win—what!

Are Women Motorists "Road Hogs?"

THE automobile "Road Hog" is held responsible for many of the fatal accidents which conduce to mark this form of locomotion. But it has remained for an English writer to declare that women are the worst offenders in this way. He writes:

"The man road-hog is going, but a far worse terror is taking his place—the woman road-hog. I do not remember meeting in the course of some fifteen years' driving anything so dangerous as this new pest. For she is nothing else. There is a certain small proportion of womankind who can drive motor cars. They have mechanical ears and hands, a sense of machinery, knowledge, self-confidence, and road sense—the qualities, in short, which mark the motor driver from the person who merely drives a car. But the rest ought to be forbidden by law to sit in the driving seat of a motor-car on the public roads. The average woman driver has become a real menace to our safety."

"Who does not know her? She generally drives a two-seated car, in which she sits, or rather lies, back in the attitude of her predecessor, the garage-loafer road-hog. The smaller the car the more she tries to convey an impression of breathless speed; and the risks she causes to other people are legion."

"They seem to lose all sense of decency. They run amuck and turn the King's highway into a path of peril, no man saying a word. How often has a woman been summoned for reckless driving? The fact is, they trade upon their sex. Hideously clothed, with faces set in a Medusa-like glare, looking as little as you can conceive like human women, they rush furiously through the country, spurred on by the admiring moon-calf stares of yokels and in the sinful leniency of the rustic police."